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19 April 1951

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

SUBJECT: Report and Recommendations Relative to OPC Assessment Procedures and Utilization

1. Reference paragraph 2 of memorandum, subject same as above, dated 14 April 1951, the following general critique, with candid comments and recommendations, is offered. Non-technical language is used throughout because any deficiencies noted are not technical but administrative in origin. Faulty policy is invariably involved rather than faulty professional practice:

a. Analysis of OPC training system and its routine procedures clearly shows evidence of the system being unusually well-designed and supervised as effectively as essential security precautions permit. For obvious reasons, the bulk of activities coming under the heading of training operations could be neither observed nor analysed by the undersigned; consequently, no pertinent and valid remarks can be made in this report concerning the third aspect of TRAINING CONTROL (instructional operations). Throughout the Agency offices, there appears a common consciousness of the precision with which TRD is doing all within scope of its control to accomplish its obvious mission in accordance with Agency concepts and requirements.

b. A more detailed analysis of the OPC system of assessment indicates a well-equipped and carefully coordinated Agency activity which enjoys only vague approval from above and general non-acceptance from below. In other words, the Agency has not officially caused its Assessment Unit to present itself to consumer units, branches and divisions as an ACCEPTABLE PROGRAM, essential for all long-range planning and development.

As a unit operating within the TRD organizational structure, the Assessment Staff appears ready, willing and able to implement its psychometric program in any valid manner which will best serve Agency interests and expansion.

But unless its

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But unless its program is given clear-cut topside approval by policy statement, it will continue to be viewed as an off-standards growth accessory to rather than integrated with the organization as a whole.

Although there should be no need within the Agency to popularize or glamorize any down-to-earth assessment program, no means should be overlooked which would render it acceptable to the Agency's mass-mind. Any Agency-adopted slogan such as "ASSESSMENT MEANS ADVANCEMENT" could direct attention generally to the program's long-range value and suggest advantages which mandatory initial plus voluntary subsequent exposure to a psychometric system would entail.

Within the Assessment Unit itself there still remains traces of too-great a tendency to pattern itself after prototypes found in educational and industrial frames of reference. In this connection it is briefly pointed out that inasmuch as the Agency is unique in its missions, it is not incongruous thinking to assume that its approach to assessment could correctly be unique.

Within the OPC system of assessment, however, radical modification is not recommended mainly because it is felt to be neither essential nor desirable. Furthermore, this position is taken by the undersigned for two reasons, as follows:--

(1) The current unit has within its basic structure the potentialities needed for development to fit any program of expansion.

(2) The system shows no inadequacies which cannot be corrected or counterbalanced by minor adjustments within its current structure and mechanism.

2. It is suggested that the possibilities of the following adjustments be explored:--

a. Abandoning use (except in recruiting and selection of indigenous personnel) of the term SCREENING not only as inapplicable but misleading insofar as it implies a progressive separation process. This term is inappropriate from both operational and motivational viewpoints.

b. Substituting, in general usage, the title PSYCHOMETRIC PROGRAM wherever ASSESSMENT PROGRAM is now used.

c. Re-designing the

c. Re-designing the current assessment program in order to make it provide greater objectivity and increase its susceptibility to mass-handling of individuals. This would entail the development of a partially simplified but more extensive psychometric program which would include perhaps 5 to 7 LEVELS OF ASSESSMENT, each level being referred to by nomenclature distinct within the Agency, e.g., 3rd Echelon Assessment, Type 2B Assessment, Class 3 Assessment or just codified as ABDC, etc. Each level need not necessarily be visualized as part of any progressive sequence nor as a telescoping series although exposure to any particular level might presuppose previous exposure at another level of inquiry into the profile of an individual.

d. Making it mandatory that all incoming (newly-employed) Agency personnel be subjected to at least one of the levels of assessment or to any appropriate combination of levels in accordance with job description and Agency policy previously decided upon.

e. Requiring that all incoming Agency personnel be assessed for a minimum number of characteristics to include MOTIVATION, EFFECTIVE INTELLIGENCE and PERSONAL INTEGRITY. This combination might be visualized as an initial or basic level of assessment, utilizing not only pen-and-pencil type measuring devices but also rating scales, behavior tests, interviews in which projective methods are touched upon and wherein the clinical psychologist's use of case histories is aided by a collateral use of polygraphic appliances. Items such as EMOTIONAL STABILITY or FIELD ADAPTABILITY would be measured within other appropriate levels of assessment not necessarily higher or more intensive or less extensive but mainly subsequent to the initial level insofar as essential only in connection with particularized job descriptions.

f. Including within the more complex levels of assessment the factors of non-stress as well as stress situations in a ratio of approximately 2 to 1 (NS to S). Furthermore, the value of administering a second phase of specific tests or of conducting supplementary phases of interviews after either oral or parenteral usage of alcohol should not be overlooked.

g. Developing and correlating sets of tests, inventories, questionnaires and procedures designed by the Research and Development personnel within the

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Psychometric Unit. These devices would be designed solely for use within the Agency. They are essential mainly because the cross-sectional caliber and profiles of Agency personnel are definitely above average in some factors. It is just as absurd to expect maximally accurate conclusions from devices of universal applicability as it is to suppose that testing devices developed within the Agency cannot be independently tested for reliability and validity.

h. Increasing the number of MOBILE ASSESSMENT TEAMS and intensifying the psychometric devices they utilize, particularly in the screening of indigenous personnel. In this connection, many three-man teams, including one clinical psychologist to each team, is suggested.

3. Regardless of whether or not minor modifications, as suggested in the preceding paragraph, are explored and adopted, it is recommended that the special requirements of OPC could be better fulfilled by:--

a. Omitting all two-day assessments, as such. If it is desired that reports concerning assessment of personality contain the conclusions currently provided, an exposure of at least four days should be required. This would not necessarily demand more clinical psychologists per person assessed but would require increased emphasis upon procedures susceptible to quantity production. Continuance of two-days assessments on an optional basis would injure the whole program by rendering it even less acceptable to the Agency mass-mind.

b. Discontinuing all association of assessment with promotion or internal transfers. The term ASSESSMENT denotes the process of arriving at PREDICTIVE judgments of a person's effectiveness BEFORE he has begun working whereas APPRAISAL denotes a judgment formed AFTER the person has been working at a job for some time. Consequently, appraisal and training evaluation are equally essential for accurate advancement in career fields but they must not be linked with purely predictive judgments. This position is maintained not only because they involve considerably less of the psychometric procedures but also because their obvious susceptibility to abuse would render any attached assessment system less acceptable.

c. Utilizing a

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d. Integrating into any Research and Development Group operating within the Assessment Unit experts in the fields of Medicine, Psychiatry, Training, and Human Engineering in order to keep the overall tone of assessment activities geared continuously to the comprehensive mission it must fulfill.

e. Incorporating into assessment reports a suggestion concerning possible SALVAGE POTENTIALS wherever any assessed individual obtains arating of MEDIOCRE or below.



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